

# POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS BULLETIN

## THE CLINICAL CENTER

---

Medical Administrative Series

---

M93-14

1 December 1993

---

### MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

---

---

SUBJECT: Inpatient Pass Policy

---

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This bulletin transmits the Clinical Center policy regarding the issuance of passes to inpatients. The policy was approved by the Medical Board at its meeting on 16 November 1993.
2. Material Superseded: None
3. Filing Instructions: "Other" Section

Remove: None

Insert: No. M93-14, dated 1 December 1993

### DISTRIBUTION

Physicians and Dentists Participating in Patient Care  
Clinical Center Department Heads and Office Chiefs  
Institute Clinical Directors  
Nursing Units

# POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS BULLETIN

## THE CLINICAL CENTER

---

Medical Administrative Series

---

M93-14

1 December 1993

SUBJECT: Inpatient Pass Policy

### BACKGROUND

Passes — temporary, short-term absences from the hospital for other than medical reasons — are used at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center for several purposes. These include, but are not limited to:

- use by long-term inpatients (e.g., on NIMH units) who are often hospitalized for months at a time, for gradual reintegration into the community and assessment of their responses to treatment in the home setting.
- use for NIMH patients in the local communities, who are only intermittently needed on the inpatient units for research purposes, but whose clinical status is such that they also may need emergency hospitalization.
- use in situations where patients admitted to protocols may have lengthy periods of time between procedures (e.g., MRI scans, surgical procedures).

The use of passes reduces the overall use of Clinical Center resources by releasing the patient from the inpatient unit during a hiatus in treatment.

## POLICY

Patients may be issued a pass for periods of up to 17 consecutive days by order of a physician on the Junior or Senior Medical Staff of the Clinical Center. The pass order must be entered into the Medical Information System. A verbal order may be accepted by the nursing staff to place a patient on pass for up to 24 hours, after which time the issuing physician must issue a pass order as specified above.

## CONSIDERATIONS

In cases where the 17-day limit needs to be exceeded, the patient must physically return to the Clinical Center prior to the completion of the 17th pass day for reevaluation by the patient's physician and nursing staff. A physician and nurse must document a patient's return and examination in the patient's medical record. Subsequently, the physician may issue a new order to renew the patient's original pass by an additional 17 days from the date of reexamination. A patient may return for reexamination and pass renewal as many times as determined appropriate by the physician and nursing staff.

In very rare cases where there is a legitimate need to extend a pass beyond the 17th day without reexamination, e.g., a patient scheduled to return for reexamination has a plane flight canceled, the patient's Branch Chief or Clinical Director may authorize an exception to the above policy requirements and document it in the patient's medical record.

The primary responsibility to maintain compliance with the established pass policy requirements rests with the patient's primary physician. A patient on pass who has not been reexamined by the 17th day of the current pass must be discharged from the inpatient unit. Readmission shall be in accordance with all standard admission requirements. If the patient has not been discharged by the end of the 18th consecutive day of pass, and if no exception to extend the pass has been entered in the patient's medical record by a Clinical Director or Branch Chief, the Information Systems Department will notify the Clinical Center's Associate Director for Quality Assurance who shall resolve the situation with the patient's Clinical Director.

The Nursing Department requires the completion of the "Patient's Leave Authorization" form (NIH-288) for all patients on pass. A patient is carried on the nursing unit census while on pass (in "pass" status), and the patient's medical record is maintained on the unit during the pass period.

Passes for normal volunteer patients may be issued by the Normal Volunteer Program only with the permission of the patient's physician. Volunteer passes must be issued according to the procedures set forth by the Normal Volunteer Program office.

Patients referred from penal institutions are not permitted to leave the hospital on pass.